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Central Valley Project Improvement Act's Fish and Wildlife Programs

Water Acquisition – Instream Flow

The Region's Water Acquisition Program and its partners manage an agreement to provide additional spring and fall fishery flows on the Stanislaus, Tuolumne, Merced, and lower San Joaquin Rivers. The water is used in support of the San Joaquin River Agreement and the Vernalis Adaptive Management Plan, which is a scientifically based fishery management plan to determine the relationships between flows, exports, and other factors on fish survival in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. The increased flows benefit numerous resident and anadromous fish species but are acquired primarily to benefit Chinook salmon. Central Valley Chinook salmon constitute the majority of salmon produced in California, and at times have accounted for 70 percent or more of the statewide commercial harvest.

In 2010, the Program acquired 12,500 acre-feet of water from Merced Irrigation District for fall attraction flows and habitat improvement in the Merced and lower San Joaquin rivers. In addition, the program acquired nearly 22,000 acre-feet of water for a pulse flow in April and May, plus 26,000 acre-feet of water for the Stanislaus and lower San Joaquin River flows and water quality.

Refuge Water Supply

The CVPIA established fish and wildlife as having co-equal priority in the CVP with agricultural, and municipal and industrial users. The Act required development and implementation of the Refuge Water Supply Program to manage, secure, and deliver a reliable, clean water supply to federal, state, and private wildlife wetland habitat areas in California's Central Valley. There are 19 wildlife refuges that protect a significant portion of the last remaining 5 percent of the historic Central Valley wetlands, providing critical habitat to birds of the Pacific Flyway.

In 2010, the Program and its partners delivered to refuges, in separate accomplishments, about 403,500 acre-feet of Level 2 Water, about 64,800 acre-feet of Incremental Level 4 Water, and about 53,800 acre-feet of Incremental 4 Water.

The Program also initiated construction of seven wells for refuges. The combined production of these wells is expected to be about 7,400 acre-feet per year.

Anadromous Fish Screen Program

The Anadromous Fish Screen Program develops and implements measures to avoid losses of juvenile anadromous fish resulting from unscreened or inadequately screened diversions on the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers, their tributaries, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and the Suisun Marsh.

In 2010, the Program constructed three fish screens on diversions at Sutter Mutual State Ranch, Davis Ranches and River Garden Farms; installed a cone screen at the Lake California diversion on the Sacramento River; and initiated construction of the Phase I Natomas Mutual Fish Screen Project for a screened diversion on the Sacramento River that will replace two existing diversions on the Natomas Cross Canal. The Program also began construction of the Patterson Fish Screen on the San Joaquin River.